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The Great-souled Gandhi

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An interpretation of the thought and work of Mahatma Gandhi by one whose life was a shining witness to the ideals for which Mahatma Gandhi lived,—and died.

T. L. VASWANI

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BANARAS

INTRODUCTION*

Most of the papers brought together in this number of the "Series" are notes of talks delivered, from time to time, on the mission and message of Mahātmā Gāndhi, India's beloved leader. Like the Buddha of the long ago, Mahatma Gandhi was a prophet of compassion, an apostle of *lokasangraha*, a servant of the poor. He was, also, a *bhakta* of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. The message of his life, I believe, is an urgent need of India and the nations, today. For, today, the human race is facing a crisis,—perhaps, the greatest crisis in history.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man of truth and compassion, of silence and daring,—at once a hero and a saint! He led India : he bled for India. In him was revealed, in a richer measure than in any other man of his generation, the spirit of India. He blundered, alas! into submitting to the "partition" of India. We, alas! do not salute Bharata, today, as the soil of the *Sapta Sindhu*. Alien forces stand ready to smother Bharata. O! the destiny of the nations! I heard Gandhi, one evening, in a brief speech,—the briefest speech I ever heard in India,—say :—"Be ye *sipāhis* of India!" And I exclaimed :—"Verily, from this wise man of the East waters of healing may flow to many hearts!"

As the years have passed, I have felt, more and more, that life's true joy is not in earthly

* Written in 1961.

honours and "greatness," but in pursuit of the "little way." To seek "greatness" is to run after the shadow-shapes which come and go.

In the evening of my life, today, I know, perhaps, the world a little better. Pessimism is not the creed of age. India and the world, I begin to see, are slipping into chaos : but I, also, see that a new order, a new cosmos begins to arise.

The word "power" has, today, a fascinating sound. A great man, we are told, is a man of "power." Not so have I been taught. Would you serve India? Then must you first understand the soul of India. The soul of India is not power but *dharma*. To do *dharma* is to do what is right. Today, alas! so many of those to whom it is given to govern, to rule, think they are not "free," unless they can use their power against a party, a people, a country, a community. Today, India's intuition of the One Brotherhood of Life is trampled upon by "rulers" and "politicians" : they cling to "power." In the great days of India's history, the people saluted with reverence those as their "heroes" who set them free from tyranny,—inspired by the ideals of justice, righteousness and compassion. India is not yet free. Today, we find that men are tyrants over men and birds and beasts. Today, our cities are filled with slaughter-houses and engines of destruction.

Communism is Russia's word to the world. There is a word yet greater : it is the word which India gives for the healing of a broken, bleeding humanity. A great thinker was Sorokin, a Russian exiled from Russia. "I look to India,"

he said, "as the fountain of the wisdom whose waters may be for the healing of the nations."

Today, we talk of democracy. Do we remember that India developed, in the long ago, one of the truest democracies in history? And the basis of India's democracy was the village-folk. No bourgeois democracy we need in India, today. We need true democracy. And in a true democracy, a nation is one family, one brotherhood; and the heart of the brotherhood is the village-folk, the peasant and the labourer.

Look around you! What is the condition of the peasant? What is the condition of the labourer? The peasant and the labourer,—are they truly emancipated? Are the poor in India emancipated? Look around you! Millions are hungry and homeless. I recall a beautiful saying of a Rishi which you may read in one of the *Upanishads*. "*Anna*," the Rishi teaches, "is the first God!" *Anna* is the first *Brahman*. Food is the first God. And, today, in this ancient land, hungry millions create a situation which you must face, if you will build a new India.

There is a twofold challenge to India, today. First, the challenge of war. The world situation threatens to break into a war at any time. And I have prayed the prayer, over and over again :— "God! give us men!" Wanted men of courage; wanted new *kshatryas*. Such men will be lovers of peace : such men will worship peace in their hearts but such men will, also, realise that eternal vigilance is the price to be paid for freedom. Such men will strengthen peace movements all over the world.

And the second great challenge to India is the challenge of unemployment, the challenge of poverty. India must needs become economically strong, economically efficient. There is need, I believe, of a peasant movement in India. The peasants have been neglected for a long time. The Indian peasant has several lovable qualities. The Indian peasant has *bhakti* in his heart. The Indian peasant has love and reverence for Rāma and Krishna. The Indian peasant is at heart a lover of peace. And we need to take the help of the peasant in our efforts to rebuild India. For India must be more productive if, indeed, India is not to suffer from starvation.

And secondly, we need to build rural industries. Rural industries we need, but not American industrialism. We need a number of cottage industries : we need a number of centres which could give employment to the peasant class.

I have heard a number of young men say :— "What we need, today, is a new economics, a new economic efficiency, a new economic strength." And I say to these young men :— "Yes,—we need new economics. But what is to be the foundation of new economics?"

One man appeared in Germany, many years ago. At the close of the first world war, Germany was in great need. A Republic had been established in Germany. And in Germany they needed a brainy man, a great thinker to give Germany a new economics and make Germany a nation of the strong.

They found such a man in Rathenau. Rathenau was loved by his people. And they

gave him the portfolio in economics. In his book, *The Way of Economics*, Rathenau says :—"Germany needs new economics : but how are you to build new economics?" This question he considers in the book. And he answers the question thus. He says :—"Unto you I speak,—you that are the youths of the nation, you that are to be the makers of a new Germany! And I say this :—Cultivate the Soul! If you want a new economics, new economic strength, cultivate the soul!" Over and over again, this great man of Germany, Rathenau declared unto the youths of Germany :—"Cultivate the soul!"

You need more wealth : but if you have not cultivated your soul, you will not know how to use your wealth aright. You need more goods, it is true. But, remember, you need them all in order to serve the poor, to serve the weak, in order to re-build a nation that would love the poor as her beloved children. And so, speaking unto the youth of the nation, I say :—"Cultivate the soul!"

Men who have cultivated their soul will know what it is to grow in sympathy and service. And such men will not be disturbed by errors and misdeeds of men. Such men will love every man, every animal, every plant, every leaf, every ray of light. Such men will rebuild India. India needs new builders. India needs men who would build in the power of sympathy and love. And when India has thrown up such men in different parts of the country, then, indeed, there will descend upon us a new benediction of the spirit of history. And India will enter into a

new era. India will have her seat among the teachers of truth, the teachers of nations : India will have her seat among the healers of humanity.

Such men, servants of the Ideal, doth India need, today. Such men will, in their daily lives and daily work, show us the beauty and nobility of true service. They will not be men of ambition who cling to power and honours of the earth. They will not be men who worship gold. They will be the true disciples of India's seers and saints such as Gandhi who blessed India and humanity in our days. The music of his words and life thrills me, whenever I think of him.

Gandhi awakened millions,—in a quiet way. Everything truly great is a quiet thing. Institutions may rise and fall. Kingdoms make noise, crush and crash in noise. But the quiet power of this singular man,—a hero of the silent way,—continues challenging attention, and moves on from strength to strength.

In this tumultuous age, Gandhi's faith in the One Divine Spirit was wonderful. Many deny Him, but Gandhi raised his voice to rebuke the sceptic and the scoffer. Gandhi reproclaimed the ancient message :—"His Name, who can name? He is *A-nāma*, the Unnamable. Yet I believe in Him! My brother! you dare not silence the Heart!" The Earth and the great stars proclaim Him as the Immortal! Look with your heart and see the Eternal Secret within you!

Gandhi pealed the great message to the youths of the nation :—"Learn to renounce!" Today, in my ears has echoed, again and again, this message. Each day that message is heard

in my heart : — "Renounce! Renounce, and announce the Eternal." Fill to the brim your soul from the full blessedness of Gandhi's life : name it as you will, renunciation or love of God or the Heart that offers its all in service or sacrifice. The name is nothing but clamour and smoke. What matters is the Heart. I love to name it, in the ancient language of the Rishis, *Ātman* or the Spirit or Love.

Gandhi taught the way of loving service and renunciation. In the simple ethics of human service and love for all creatures was Gandhi's worship and Gandhi's religion. All around us are Gods : to worship God is to worship all men,— and, indeed, all animals. And he truly worships the Eternal who has learnt to worship his own countrymen and serve them as God's children,— sons of the one *Atman*, the one Eternal Self !

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THE GREAT-SOULED GANDHI*

WHEN over nine years ago, on that fateful thirtieth day of January 1948, the news travelled to me in Sind that the great-souled Gandhi, the Beloved of Bharata and the Beloved of many of my friends in Pakistan, had passed on, I said to myself :—"Be still, my heart! Be still and listen!" I listened. The very space had become vocal. It said to me :—"There is no death to him who dedicates his life to the Life Divine!" Death doth not touch Gandhi, for he gave his heart to God. Gandhi served India and clung in faith and reverence to the Lord of Love.

Moniyā,—so they called him when he was a boy. One day, he was beaten by some boys in the compound of a temple near his house. He complained to his mother. She said to him :—"Why didn't you hit back?" He said :—"Mother! how can you ask me to hit back? Am I not their brother?" A brother is a burden-bearer. And Gandhi bore the burden of millions.

Years before he became a teacher and a healer of men in India, he taught in South Africa that to live was to give,—and share with the poor. Not in vanity and self-love, but in sympathy and fellowship did Gandhi serve and suffer for the forsaken and forlorn.

In the days of his youth he read Thoreau and Emerson, Mazzini and Ruskin, the *Ramayana*

*Based on a talk broadcast from the All-India Radio, Poona, on Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday [2·10·1957].

and the *Upanishads* : and he began to realise the meaning of education. "Education," Gandhi wrote, "does not mean a knowledge of letters; education means character-building." The secret of character-building, he saw, was in the three qualities of (1) duty; (2) service; and (3) love of truth. And he who truly loved truth, he said, was humble. This thought grew upon him when, in later years, he began to study the Gita. He realised that there were many roads to Truth, many ways of approach to the Mystery, and he grew in love and reverence for Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, Mahavira and Muhammad, Nanak and Kabir, St. Francis and Tolstoy. And he learnt to regard Humanity as one Family.

A few of us were with Gandhi as he walked, one day, along the bridge which leads from Rohri to Sukkur, in Sind. In answer to the question :— "What is the easiest way to God?" Gandhi said :—"To me *seva*,—service of the poor,—opens the easiest way to God." When, in 1932, Gandhi went to London, he preferred to live in the East End of London,—a quarter of the poor folk. They had free access to him, and children became his friends in his morning walks. He left behind, where he stayed, a spinning wheel and one of his sandals. A poor Londoner, seeing these two simple things of Gandhi, said :—"O, we all liked Gandhi. He got along famous with us people here. Some folks couldn't understand what he meant when he talked about praying and giving up things to the poor. We could understand him, and we loved him!"

Religion, to Gandhi, was not creed but right life,—a life of sympathy and love, of fellowship with the poor. His leadership was deeply rooted in his life. He bore witness to the spiritual values of India's ancient heritage. His life reflected reverence for God and for all prophets and saints, and love for all creatures,—men and birds and beasts. His life reflected the spiritual outlook which, indeed, was ever a mark of India's *rishis* and saints. The difference between his outlook and that of communism was significant. Gandhi could sacrifice all but not his spiritual outlook : the communist would sacrifice all but not his power.

It seems to me that Gandhi is a Voice of God to the modern world. Say not Gandhi is dead! Gandhi is a Voice of God unto the nations of the world. And this morning, methinks, I heard Gandhi say to me :—"Brothers are ye all!"

Hindus and Muslims, Parsis and Christians, Jains and Buddhists,—brothers are you all! Hindustan and Pakistan, brothers are ye both! Brothers are ye! All the races of the earth are brothers. All the religions of the world are brothers. And these hands are given you to help, not to butcher. These hearts are given you to love, not to hate. Brain and science and machinery and civilisation and all your technical equipment are given you for the service of the poor and needy, the lowly and the lost, for the service of our broken, bewildered humanity.

Among the pictures drawn from the lives of the truly great ones of humanity, there be three on which my thoughts have rested, from time to time, in the chaos and conflict of these days. One

is the picture of Krishna wiping the tears of an outcast woman, saying to her :—"Weep not, my child! I am with thee." The second is the picture of Jesus on the Cross, crying :—"*Eloi! Eloi!*" "My God! My God!" The third is the picture of Gandhi struck by the bullets of an Indian brother and, while falling backward, mortally hurt, quietly praying the mystic word of the ancient *rishi* :—"*He Rama! He Rama!*" "O Rama! O Rama!"

These pictures have, again and again, touched mine eyes with tears. On this page, which I transmit on the radio, there are ink and tears. The ink will dry : may my tears speak! May they speak in this day when the Heart seems to have withered! May they speak in this day when life seems to many to be bitter with toil and travail,—when the winds are rough and wild and the birds on yon trees have ceased their singing, and the hunger of India's millions makes their life darker and colder day by day! To India and other nations of the East, to India and all the wandering peoples of the West,—wandering from violence to violence,—Beloved Gandhi gave the message which is Ancient India's message to the modern world. The message was a call to New Freedom! And the Call came from the depths of a dedicated heart :—"O children of God! You cannot build a Welfare State until you cultivate the soul!"

Sisters and brothers! I thank you, And may the benedictions of Him,—my Master and your Master,—shine and shine and shine on you for ever and evermore!

THE MAN WITH A LANTERN*

FIVE continents paid homage to Gandhi. An American journalist said of him :—"His influence is immeasurable." But these words are, to my mind, an under-estimate of his tremendous power. Gandhi became, and through him India became, great in the life of the world.

Gandhi had a genius for action. A great philosopher of Europe,—Schopenhauer,—discusses the question :—"What is genius?" Schopenhauer says :—"I see genius in the world of intellect." But there is genius, also, in the world of will. Gandhi was a man of tremendous will. Of him the French scholar, Professor Martineau, wrote :—"We must honestly admit that Gandhi gave the whole world the example of one of the strongest wills that humanity has ever seen."

Yes,—it was a mighty will Gandhi had. But there is something higher than might. Gandhi's will was not only mighty : it was sanctified. For Gandhi had surrendered his will to the Lord. Gandhi's life was a life of *yagna*.

Arjuna's will was joined to the will of Sri Krishna : and Arjuna's life became heroic, fruitful. Gandhi's will was surrendered at the Lotus-feet of the Lord : and so this man, small in size,—some called him a "little man,"—shook the mighty British Empire as none else could do. In his heart burned a Flame. How many

* Excerpts from a talk delivered by Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) to the Gita Class, Poona.

sleepless hours did he not spend thinking of the deep tragedy of India! The tragedy of the nation, once mighty, now in poverty, entered as an iron in his soul. There was sadness in his beautiful smile.

I think of Gandhi as "the man with a lantern," in the story. Some of you, perhaps, know that little story of the man who had, in his hands, a lantern. And with the lantern in his hand, he went, from house to house, from cottage to cottage, saying :—"Where art thou, brother? Still asleep?" There was magic in his words. And when he said, "Where art thou, my brother?" the man, half asleep, woke up and answered :—"I am here! I am here!" And, one by one, they rose and followed the light of this man,—this simple man with a lantern in his hand. One by one, men awoke : one by one, men and women arose, saying :—"We follow thee!"

So it happened in the case of Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene, so many of us were living a life of ease and indifference. He came,—he, in whom the spirit of India revealed itself,—Gandhi came : he went from village to village, from cottage to cottage : and in answer to his affectionate call, the people woke from slumber and said :—"We are here, Master! to follow thee!"

An English journal, reviewing Gandhi's, *My Experiments with Truth*, wrote some years ago :—"India was fortunate in getting Gandhi's guidance. And under his simple leadership, India marched on to independence."

How significant these words,—"simple leader-

ship!"

Yes,—simple was he and humble, and a lover of God was he, and a servant of man, and a teacher of humanity. May he become an inspiration to many in India! Painfully have I noticed that we are forgetting him. For what is it to remember? To remember is to follow in the footsteps of the beloved. Some of us call him "Master," and then, with tear-touched eyes, I say to myself:—"Where, O Gandhi, where art thou in our daily life?" In our daily life and living, are we simple? Are we humble? Do we share the riches of our life with the poor?

May many in many parts of India follow in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and bring forward the day quickly when India may, again, be a teacher of humanity, a servant of all the nations of the earth!

"INDIA HATH NEED OF THEE!"

AMONG the great ones I have met, I saw the ideal of the Gitā reflected in Gandhi more, perhaps, than in anyone else. I may well speak of him as a *bhakta* of the Gita. He did not exaggerate, I feel sure, when he referred to the Gita as his "Mother." Much he owed to the Gita,—much more than many seem to be aware of. In the *Young India*, Mahatma Gandhi wrote :—

> "When disappointment stares me in the face, and all around I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavad Gita*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I invariably begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies,—and my life has been full of external tragedies,—and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*."

Who loved India more than Gandhi? But Gandhi kept clear of narrow nation-cults which obscure the vision of the unity of Humanity. The nationalisms of the West suffer from nation-idolatry. Gandhi loved the poem written by an Englishman, who was at once a scholar and a saint :—"Lead, kindly Light!" And Gandhi I call a man of Light. Gandhi led his countrymen through darkness to light. I saw reflected in his face and his words the light of service to the poor, the light of friendship with the lowly and the lost, with the broken ones of India and humanity.

I do not regard Gandhi as essentially a politician. And to me the problem of India is not merely political. There is a biology of the nation. This must be studied and its laws. No life without creative *shakti*. Until this is released, India may not hope to achieve her real freedom. The new *shakti* which India needs will be developed in the measure in which we enter into disinterested fellowship with the poor. Hence the significance of Gandhi and his message.

He is not merely a nationalist. He is a *bhakta* of the Gita,—a *bhakta* of the great Revealers of the human race,—of Rāma and Krishna, of Tulsi and Tukā, of Buddha and Jesus. "My patriotism," Gandhi said, "includes the good of mankind in general."

Where among India's distinguished patriots is there, today, one disciple of Gandhi, inspired by his love of the *rishis* and saints, his reverence for the village-folk, his readiness not to "patronise" the "untouchables" but to share their "dirty work" and so to bless them and be blessed? And is there one in our midst, today, who would find his greatest joy in sitting at the feet of children and, gazing at their wonder-filled eyes, exclaim as did Krishna and Jesus in the long ago :—"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"? How many among India's great ones, today, would say with Gandhi :—"All religions are true! And all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism"?

My aching eyes behold the tragedy of the East and the tragedy of the West, and I exclaim :—"Beloved Gandhi! India hath need of thee! And the world hath need of thee!"

A DEDICATED LIFE*

I AM with you this morning to lay at the sacred memory a few flowers of my love. You speak of him as Mahatma Gandhi : you speak of him as the "Father of the Nation." And I know in other ways, too, have many spoken of this great one. May I tell you how in the heart within me I think of him? I love to call him "Brother" : Brother Gandhi! A brother is a burden-bearer. And Brother Gandhi has borne the burden of millions. In one of his books, he says :—"I would rather be torn to pieces than disown my brothers and sisters in suffering and pain!"

Brotherhood of man,—this is what we have forgotten. And so you find, today, peoples fighting one another, and nations, alike in East and West, still travailing along the path of violence and war. The great message of peace, of love, of fellowship, of brotherhood, is the piteous need of all the nations. Is it not, also, our piteous need in this country?

I moved out, the other day, to survey your great city, Bombay. We called it, in far-off Sind, Bombay the Beautiful. I stood in the midst of the tumults of your big city : and big tears stood in mine eyes. Why? I said to myself :—"Here, in your great and prosperous city of Bombay, are so many who sleep on the road-side, at night, shivering in the cold of winter." And I said to

*From an address delivered at Bombay on the occasion of the first death-anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (30.1.1949).

myself :—"They sleep on the road-side : they, too, are my brothers and my sisters." Your people are my people! And then I recalled that in the last twelve months have travelled to Bombay so many of my people from Sind : so many whom you call "refugees" but whom you should love and call your "brothers." They, several lakhs of them, are homeless, shelterless. And I said to myself :—"My people are your people!" This thought will grow in the measure in which we believe in the Brotherhood of Man. The teaching of Brotherhood, Gandhi illumined in his sacrificial life.

I wonder if ever you asked yourself the question :—What is the meaning of the word, "Gandhi?" The word "Gandhi" means one who is "fragrant" : and fragrance-filled is the life of Brother Gandhi. His fragrance lay just in this that he identified himself with the broken ones, with the neglected ones, with the indentured labourers, with the outcast,—the "untouchables," the Harijans,—with the poorest, the lowliest and the lost, with all those whom the world, intoxicated with power, tramples upon every day. Gandhi was a champion of the poor against oppression, injustice and insolence of might and power.

I salute Gandhi as a servant of the poor, as a brother of the poor, as a lover of the poor, as a devotee of the poor, ah! as a worshipper of the poor. The key-note to his wonderful life,—a life of heroic deeds, of heroic achievements, of heroic aspirations, of heroic attainments,—the secret of his life is his spirit of *sevā*, the spirit of

service and sacrifice.

Gandhi's has been a dedicated life,—a life dedicated to the service of the poor. This martyred man, adored by millions, gives us the *mantra* of sacrifice. This prophet of peace had to spend many years within the area of challenge and storm. But his life never failed to bear witness to that new freedom which is fellowship with the poor and oppressed.

Sometimes, when I think of Mahatma Gandhi, the figure of another great one rises before me,—the figure of Father Damien. Damien dedicated his life to the service of lepers and he became a leper. Brother Gandhi dedicated his life to the service of the poor in India, and he became a *fakir* : he became a poor man. Father Damien, on one occasion said :—"In the Kingdom of God there are no aliens!"

May I not say that in the Kingdom of Free India there should be no aliens? And yet,—the thought has come to me painfully, again and again, in this Free India I feel that I am an alien! Let us shake hands of fellowship and brotherhood, one with the other. Let us strive to understand the life and teaching of Brother Gandhi. He was a true brother : therefore is he a Mahātmā, a great soul. He was a true brother : therefore is he become one of the shining lights of humanity. And the light of his life, the light of love, shall grow, from more to more, in the coming days.

A LITTLE ONE*

I CAN but speak a word or two on this occasion. I feel grateful to you for the love which hath called me in your midst. And let me say this to you, your School is a temple of knowledge. After many years I come to you to have your blessings : and I feel so happy to see that the school has grown not in numbers merely but, what is more, grown in the right atmosphere,—grown, I believe, in the spirit of which Mahatma Gandhi is a shining symbol in the modern world.

Sisters and brothers, when I think of this mighty one that you call Mahatma Gandhi, I say to myself :—The race of heroes is not dead. Gandhi made life triumphant. Gandhi showed how to face life in accordance with the teaching of Krishna, Buddha and the Christ. Gandhi showed how one might cast out fear and take his stand on the battlefield of life.

"The seeker after Truth," Gandhi says, "must conquer all fears. And fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off attachment for wealth, for family and for the body. All these are not ours, but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why, then, should we entertain any fears?"

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* From an Address delivered by Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) at the Sharda Mandir, Karachi, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's, 77th birthday celebrations (1945).

This sacred day, I lay at his feet a few flowers of my heart, and I bow down to him with reverent love, and I ask of him to pour his benedictions on me and upon you all. What is the supreme declaration of this, the greatest son of modern India? Am I wrong in saying that Mahatma Gandhi matched his simplicity and spiritual strength with a great Empire, and he faced the difficulties of the task in the spirit of a true hero, with the courage of the brave, the courage of Jesus and the Beatitudes? He was a lover of Tolstoy and St. Paul, of the Gitā and the "Sermon on the Mount," which he said, "competes with the Gita on almost equal footing for the domination of my heart." Yes,—he argued that the "Sermon on the Mount" should be taught to Indian students in Indian schools. His eclectic mind tried to "unite the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount" with those of the Gita and "The Light of Asia." And he said :—"That renunciation is the highest expression of religion, made a tremendous appeal to me."

Gandhi was a hero. Yet, over and over again, have I said to myself, the secret of this great one was even this that he forget his greatness. In his daily life, his activities and aspirations, his daily struggles and strivings, Gandhi forgot his greatness. He went about as a little one. And this day, as I pay him my humble homage, I wish to salute him as a little one. He is a lover of the little ones. He became a little one himself. Clothed in humility and filled with love, he moved about amongst men as a

little one.

Over two thousand years ago, appeared a mighty thinker in ancient Greece : he wrote a number of books. They say, he wrote a thousand books. Some of them are studied still in the universities of Europe and Asia. Aristotle was his name.

A group of his students meet him, one day, and they say to him :—"Master! you have taught many things and you have written many books. Tell us in a few words what is the purpose of knowledge."

And this great thinker,—the greatest philosopher of Greece,—says :—"The meaning, the purpose of knowledge is in one single thought,—service!"

The glory that was Greece faded : the grandeur that was Rome dawned upon Europe. But that grandeur was the pomp of power, not the light of thought, nor the radiance of service. One greater than Aristotle,—Mahatma Gandhi,—in our days taught us the truth that the meaning of life, the meaning of true life, is service and sacrifice.

May this lesson of the radiant life of Mahatma Gandhi go into the hearts of some of you who have been listening to me this morning :—The purpose of life is dedication to the Eternal. The meaning of life is consecration to the eternal values of life.

And may the benedictions of the Master shine upon you for ever and for evermore!

THE SECRET OF HIS FRAGRANCE*

I SPEAK of Gandhi in love and reverence. Over and over again, have I felt, when speaking of the great-souled Gandhi, that I sit at the feet of a gracious world figure.

I believe I do not exaggerate when I say that since the appearance of Gautama Buddha,—who came with his great message of compassion and reverence for all life,—there has not appeared in India another whom India's millions offered greater reverence. How they came,—thousands upon thousands of men and women,—to hear him! Frail was his figure and short was his stature! But there was something indefinable which went out of him and touched the hearts of millions of the Motherland. How they came to listen to this little man! How they came and touched his feet and his garments, saying to him :—"Bless us! Bless us!"

He saw an image of God in everyone, in the drunkard, in the gambler, in those who went astray. Gandhi saw God's image in the sinner,—an image of Divine Love. He forgot everything except the needs of his brothers and sisters. His brothers and sisters were all. A brother was he,—a brother, a burden-bearer of the millions of this ancient land.

To him, India was not a country apart, but a part of humanity. On one occasion, Gandhi

*Excerpts from a talk delivered by Beloved Dadaji (Sri T. L. Vaswani) to the Gita Class, Poona.

spoke the following significant words. He said :—"My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free and, if need be, the whole of my country may die if only the human race may live."

To Gandhi, India was a part of humanity. Gandhi was filled, through and through, with the Gita's ideal of *lokasangraha*. "*Sangraha*" means "welfare" : "*loka*" means "the world," "humanity." The welfare of humanity, Gandhi sought : the welfare of humanity is what Gandhi worked for. This concept Gandhi never forgot. On one occasion, Gandhi said :—"I am wedded to India because I believe that India has a mission for the world." Himself a servant of all, he wanted India to be a servant of Humanity.

WHEN WILL HIS FACE SHINE AGAIN?*

I KNOW not, how many there be in our crowded cities who truly remember Gandhi today. I know that outside India,—in Europe and America,—there are groups of earnest men and women to whom Gandhi is a star to guide them on the path of a new life, a new civilisation.

Western civilisation is on the point of perishing. Today, international forces confront us. Today, I see a ring of chaos surrounding India. And the international situation, as I survey it, carries with it the burden of a coming catastrophe. The world is drifting,—so it seems to me and to some of the great thinkers of Europe,—to a new period of darkness. And, as I have surveyed the situation, I have said to myself :—"May not the wisdom of the Gita, the wisdom of true India,—not the India of her noisy cities and *loksabhās* and assemblies, but the true India, the real India, hidden, alas ! from India's politicians,—may not the wisdom of India's culture, the wisdom of the Gita, help in leading us out of darkness into Light ?" Gandhi's life,—and Gandhi's message, in its fundamentals,—is to me a symbol of the wisdom of the Gita, the wisdom of India's culture.

To the spiritual family of Buddha and Nanak and St. Francis bleonged Mahatma Gandhi.

* Excerpts from the presidential address delivered by Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) at the Gandhi Jayanti Meeting held on Chowpatty Sands, Bombay. The Meeting was organised by the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee.

Gandhi appeared at a time which was a very critical one in the history of India He came when India seemed to be falling into an abyss, —the abyss of a violent revolution. The emphasis of the revolution Gandhi worked for was on sympathy and humanity, on service and fellowship with the poor.

Like Spengler in Germany, Gandhi realised that the industrial revolution was the cause of the decay of the West. Gandhi urged that a free India must save herself from the tragedy of industrial revolution. Industrialisation means capitalism. Capitalism means much wealth and much violence and so becomes the cause of wars. Gandhi pleaded for renewal of the village and village industries. Democracy, he said, is not the rule of money but simple life and true *swaraj* is service of the poor.

When will the face of Gandhi shine again in the affairs of our State and the activities of our public life? For the lust of power that stains our public work, for all the cruelty that condemns so many to sleep on the road-side and live in slums, for our daily cruelty to the animals, with tears in my eyes I pray to God :—"O Lord of Love! of Thy compassion mayst Thou forgive! Mayst Thou forgive!"

APPENDIX

BAPUJI AND DADAJI*

By Prof. K. N. VASWANI
Editor, "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi," Delhi

BĀPU and Dādā,—two men of God, two great souls whose gospel has been *one*, the worship of the Lord through the service of man. "He prayeth best, who loveth best."

Gandhiji, whether in his Ashram at Sābarmati, in Ahmedābad, or at Sevāgram, in Wārdha, was greeted as "Bāpu" by all in the Ashram; and indeed, he was "Bāpu" or father, for all went to him for guidance on their problems; and later, when freedom came, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru greeted him as the Father of the Indian Nation. Vaswaniji, whether in his Ashram at Hyderābad-Sind, before Partition, or now in his Ashram at Poona, is greeted as "Dādā," for to everyone, Vaswaniji is like a loving elder brother or father, and all go to him with their problems, in faith, and return blessed.

"Beloved Dadaji!" we all call him, for how boundless is his love for all! Indeed, in his presence, one feels a fountain of love flowing into one's heart for all! At least, this was my personal experience during the seven weeks that I was in Poona, to sit at his feet, and to help to set up the Mirā College for Girls, as its first Principal, in 1962. It was an unforgettable experience.

"Kindle the Light!" was the motto Dadaji gave for St. Mira's College for Girls. "Are you, are we, kindling the Light of Love, of Compassion?" he ever asks the large

* Written in 1966.

gatherings of people,—men, women and children,—whom he addresses in Poona. And the answer you find in the institutions of *seva* that surround him in Poona : two free Dispensaries for the poor; a Relief Fund for the needy to provide them monthly for their food and clothing; a Nari-Shalla, for the women to train them to work and to stand on their own feet; education for the young girls and boys in the St. Mira Schools and College, education which is free for the poor and elevating and soul-inspiring for all, an education not only of the mind but, also, of the hand, as Bapu would have loved it, and even more of the heart, as both these great ones have always stressed.

Young India was Gandhiji's first weekly in India. He wished to mould the young, and to make India new. This was his vision, his dream. This has been Dada's dream. And the two great sons of India laboured together in love for long to make this dream a reality.

When Bapu wrote in his *Young India*, in those days, Dada wrote a number of books :—*Awake Young India*, *India In Chains*, *Builders of To-morrow*, *India Arisen*, and many more. And Dada, also, wrote often in Bapu's *Young India*, in support of non-co-operation as an effective means for India's liberation. Thus, in 1921, the very first issue of *Young India* of 5–1–1921, carried in its place of honour, on its front cover page, as its very first article, Dada's contribution under the caption, "Philosophy of War," wherein Dada wrote :— "Duty and Discipline! There is the spirit in which the true co-operators may march through the struggle of these days, keeping their hearts in courage, believing in the value of suffering, knowing that vigour is not violence and accepting the sacrifice. And it is the men and women, filled with this spirit, not inert intellectuals, not popular demagogues, not evasive politicians, who will be, I believe, our leaders and liberators in the coming days."

Bapu welcomed and commended, in the columns of *Young India*, Dada's writings, speeches and letters. Thus, for example, in his article, "A Mock Trial," in *Young India* of 25-8-1921, commenting on the trial of Swami Krishnanand in Karachi, Bapu wrote :—"It is true...that Prof. Vaswani* and other staunch workers tried to curb the fury of the mob and even partly succeeded and prevented worse things from happening." And Bapu concluded this article thus :—"Prof. Vaswani wrote a dignified letter to sympathy to Mr. Price, M.L.A., regretting the incident... Mr. Price wrote a splenetic letter in reply. Prof. Vaswani wrote again. Mr. Price was still angry. I reproduce elsewhere two typical letters out of the interesting correspondence that passed between the two,—one from Mr. Price, by no means his worst, and one from Prof. Vaswani, calm and dignified. The latter is also valuable as a cogent statement of a non-co-operator's position."

Love and admiration, understanding and regard were mutual and whole-hearted between these two great souls, whose hearts beat as one in the love of the motherland, the service of all humanity. Bapu read Dada's books. Speaking to the inmates of his Ashram, on the morning of 26th January 1922, he said :—"I am going today to Bardoli for the preparation of successfully carrying out the programme of civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes...Last night I was reading a book by Prof. T. L. Vaswani. When writing about self-denial, he has given the instance of Rana Pratap Singh. His thoughts are very beautiful....."

And while during Bapu's absence in prison, many wavered in his support, Dada remained firm, for in the *Young India* of 29-6-1922,—then edited by Shri Rajagopalachari, who when freedom came became the first Indian Governor-General of India,—carried on its cover page,

* Dadaji was, in those days, known as Prof. T. L. Vaswani.

under the caption, "A Professors' Warning," Dada's powerful support of Bapu's programme and his warning to those who wished to change it. Dada wrote :—"In a non-violent struggle, such as we are in, the *moral* is, I believe, much more important than *numbers*. There are friends who ask for changes in the programme of non-co-operation... the test question is how will the changes affect the *moral* of the movement? If after having boycotted the Councils, non-co-operators seek entry at a time when the revered Leader and thousands of his comrades are in jail, will the mass feeling be well pleased with the change?...Nationalists want to capture the Councils. Will the Councils capture them?"

Remarkable must be reckoned this unity in approach between the thinking of these two great kindred souls, for it was a rare and exceptional,—almost a unique,— experience, considering the fact that many great leaders of India were then unable to appreciate Bapu's stand and the lead that he was giving to the Nation. Neither Dr. Besant nor Rabindranath Tagore shared Gandhiji's vision and views as Vaswaniji did; the hearts of the two great souls beat in unison, for both were seers, both had intuition and insight, both felt the pulse of the people, both believed firmly that He is the only Guide and He had offered the new way of National liberation for India, that this way was consistent with the rich ancient traditions of the Rishis of India, and that India had a mission to expound this way, and to contribute it as its gift to the world and to humanity. Both had identified themselves with the God in suffering humanity, both were seeking to serve the lowly and the lost, the poor and the down-trodden, and to recognise the dignity of the human being, however down-trodden, and to awaken the conscience of all to their duty to the forlorn and the forsaken.

Gandhiji, bearing the lowly and the forlorn in his

mind, said :—"I shall wipe every tear from every eye," and exhorted all, who would listen to him thus:—"I will give you a talisman. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

And Vaswaniji said :—"There is holier music in silent service of the poor and lowly than in all the gorgeous chanting of temple priests....So many gods of gold in the temples! If you will truly worship them, melt them and pour out the gold in service of the starving, shivering gods of the earth."

While Sri Aurobindo, and even Gurudev Tagore, for certain reasons, were not votaries of swadeshi and khadi in Bapu's way, Dada was completely at one with him,—he continues to wear even now a loin cloth of khadi,—all is simple about and around him. "Simplicity is the secret of true beauty," he says.

Even as Acharya Vinoba's, deep is Dada's pain, as after Bapu, he finds India fast becoming an imitation of the West. In deep anguish, he recently said :—"Mahatma Gandhi's name is still on our lips, but I seem to miss his face in our plans and programmes of national reconstruction."

On Bapu's birthday, here in Delhi, every year, I have been wending my way to Rājghat where, at the spot where his bullet-ridden body was cremated, had been built a simple memorial bearing the words, "Hey Ram," worthy of this simple man, who, a man of God, died, with God's Name on his lips, a martyr in the cause of man's love for fellowman, proclaiming through his death, as he had done throughout his life, that all men are brothers and Love is the Law of Life.

The original simple memorial has, however, now been replaced by an expensive marble memorial surrounded by huge and massive stone structures which proclaim not the simple Gandhi, but the pride and vanity

which, Bapu proclaimed, were vain.

As I wend my way to Rajghat, I notice opposite the Gandhi Memorial Museum, the hovels of the poor people, they are not huts even; women and children lie huddled under the shelter of their bullock carts, and the men work with crude implements under the shadow of these carts, protecting themselves from the glare of the hot sun. The sight keeps haunting me, as I reach Rajghat and as, I bow down at Bapu's Samadhi, I seem to hear Bapu's words :— "I will give you a talisman. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man...and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him." And I seem to hear Dada's words :—"I seem to miss Bapu's face in our plans....." How very true these words of two men of God! But do we listen to them?

Poona will celebrate Dada's 86th birthday* and there will be great enthusisasm and festivity. I know Dada ever insists that no celebration, whether of Janmashtami, the annual day of the Mira College or the Mira Schools, his own birthday or any other, is complete without free feeding of the poor, free distribution of milk and fruit among the patients in the hospitals. The celebrations will also include the lighting of lamps. Dada will kindle so many candles, and so many will join in their love and enthusiasm in this kindling of the lights. In the midst of this festivity, how many of us will remember Dada's true message to each one of us :—"Love is the light of life, my child." And how very few of us will really kindle this light in our lives?

Bapu and Dada : two men of God! Their vision is one. Their wisdom is one. "Love is the law of life; Love is the light of life." "Love is God and God is Love."

* This was written in November, 1966.

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